



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D C 20520

October 28, 1976

*Rec'd 11/11/76
Reg. No. 2335284*

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL
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Honorable Robert C. Hill
American Ambassador
American Embassy
Buenos Aires

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

Bob Zimmermann has returned from what was clearly a very worthwhile visit to Buenos Aires. He got back just in time to attend a luncheon which we arranged for Americo Grossman, Enrique Osella Munoz and Enrique Vanoli. I think the trio's second visit to Washington went extremely well.

As I believe you are aware, we asked our visitors to return to Washington in order to meet with Charlie Bray and David Lazar. They had been somewhat disappointed during their initial stopover, because they had not had more time for conversations with ARA officers. Grossman complained to Frank Ortiz, who in turn spoke to Bill Luers, Charlie Bray and myself.

Very frankly, I did not realize how important these visitors were to the Embassy and that calls on people like Bray and Lazar were in order. I did know of their desire for political contacts and tried to pave the way for them with the staffs of Congressmen Harkin and Fraser, and the American Jewish Committee.

On Sunday, October 24, I spent almost three hours with Grossman at his hotel. He had returned to Washington a day ahead of the two Enriques. Grossman praised you and Wayne very highly. He went over his relationship with the Embassy, his close ties to Peron, and his present access to Ministers and one member of the Junta. Our talk was very friendly.

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Grossman explained that they had not called on John Salzberg of Fraser's staff because of advice from Victor Beauge, who is the Political Counselor at the Argentine Embassy. Ambassador Musich, on the other hand, had no objection to the call on Salzberg. Nevertheless, the trio opted to stay away from Salzberg to avoid association with a committee that accepted the testimony of "guerrilla lawyers."

On Tuesday the 26th, I arranged a luncheon at the Foreign Service Club for the trio, Bob, Jim Buchanan and myself. Despite the Club's haute cuisine, it was a nice affair. The Argentines were far more impressive than the first time around and more relaxed. I talked at length to the two Enriques and was favorably impressed by both. One has to listen more carefully to Osella Munoz but he does have substance. Vanoli, of course, is the most articulate of the three.

In the afternoon, they called on Charlie Bray. The call lasted 45 minutes and, afterwards, Bray asked if the group would be in Washington long enough for him to host a luncheon or dinner. This was impossible, but Grossman invited Bray to "La Casa del Pueblo" to meet again with the two Enriques and you. Charlie accepted, and we assume you will work this into Charlie's schedule if you think it is a good idea.

Bittel's letter to the President was delivered to Bray. A copy is enclosed. We will submit it to the White House and request permission for you to acknowledge it orally on behalf of the President. Balbin's letter never arrived - to Vanoli's discomfiture. We reassured Vanoli, noting that we knew he could speak for Balbin.

The group concluded the day's labor with a call on David Lazar at the NSC. I think Dave found the meeting useful and, as a matter of fact, suggested that the Argentines call on Fraser or his staff. Grossman explained that the group could not do that after "guerrillas" had testified. We spent 45 minutes with Dave.

Vanoli or Osella-Munoz commented to Dave that it was significant that representatives of Argentina's two major parties should be here together. They were not

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received at the NSC, however, as representatives of political parties but as individuals. This is the reason the Peronista letter was delivered to State and not the NSC. I pointed this out to Grossman when I asked that the letter be delivered to Bray. If our visitors try to "use" their call at the White House, we should note that they were received as private individuals.

Several interesting points were made to Bray, Lazar and others here:

-- The three agreed that there are serious violations of human rights in Argentina.

-- They characterized the Fraser hearings as interference in Argentine domestic affairs, which would not improve the human rights situation. On the contrary, they felt that it would strengthen the hand of the "fascists" or the guerrillas, who took advantage of the hearings.

-- For better or for worse, they said that their parties were behind President Videla but that the latter seemed to be in a dead-end street. They wanted to see Videla assert himself.

-- They felt that Videla and Viola represent the best hopes in the military for a return to democratic rule. Other military alternatives would be repressive, according to them.

-- The group envisioned a transitional period, perhaps of five years, before a return to political normalcy. During this period a military president could work with the civilian parties.

-- They urged the United States to bring diplomatic pressure to bear on the Argentine military in order to get them to restore civil liberties. Sanctions or aid cutoffs, they insisted, would be counterproductive. They said Guzzetti's visit provided a good opportunity for the United States to press for democratic change.

-- Human rights issues belong in the United Nations. They did not think that the OAS human rights commission is an appropriate forum because too many OAS members violate human rights.

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One of the most important points they made was that human rights activism could well lead to reinforcing authoritarian rule in Argentina. They recognized that much good comes from human rights pressure but that it is a double-edged sword and can be self-defeating.

My thanks to you and Wayne for selecting these visitors. I hope they return with positive impressions about their visit.

And I'm looking forward to your upcoming visit to Washington. You'll find us a little more settled I think.

My very best.

Sincerely,



Fernando E. Rondon

Enclosure: As stated.

cc: NSC - Mr. Lazar
Amembassy B.A. - Mr. Smith

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Movimiento Nacional Justicialista

Consejo Superior

BUENOS AIRES (Argentina) Octubre de 1976

Señor Candidato a la Presidencia de los Estados Unidos,

Mr. GERALD FORD

Presente

Tengo el alto honor de dirigirme a Ud. en nombre y representación del PARTIDO JUSTICIALISTA que presido, con el objeto de hacerle llegar nuestros saludos en vísperas de la jornada electoral del próximo 2 de Noviembre, en la que el Pueblo Norteamericano expresará su soberana voluntad en la elección de su futuro Presidente.

Si la ciudadanía, en ejercicio de la democracia, así lo dispone, le corresponderá a Ud. continuar rigiendo los destinos de su Patria, en momentos difíciles para el mundo y en particular para los pueblos sudamericanos que prosiguen luchando constantemente por el logro de su pleno desarrollo y felicidad.

El presente mensaje contiene nuestras mejores esperanzas por una mayor consolidación de nuestras relaciones y para que juntos Estados Unidos y Argentina, promuevan la integración económica, social y espiritual del Continente, sin hegemonías dominantes, y todos al servicio del destino común.

La mutua comprensión y recíproca colaboración constituyen el basamento del nuevo ciclo que aspiramos iniciar a fin de que las Américas unidas ofrezcan al mundo el ejemplo de su madurez política y resulten un pilar incommovible para la consolidación de la paz y el bienestar de toda la humanidad.

Al desearle el mejor de los éxitos, me complace en expresarle el testimonio de mi alta consideración.

DEOLINDO FELIPE BITTEL

Presidente del Partido Justicialista

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE October 21, 1976
Time and Place: 11:30 am
Deputy Secretary's office

SUBJECT: Argentine Ambassador Farewell Call on Deputy Secretary

PARTICIPANTS: Arnaldo Musich
Argentine Ambassador

Charles W. Robinson
The Deputy Secretary

Harry W. Shlaudeman
Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs

COPIES: Mr. Robinson
Mr. Shlaudeman
ARA/ECA - Mr. Zimmermann

American Embassy, Buenos Aires

Farewell

Ambassador Musich called on the Deputy Secretary to say farewell. After an exchange of courtesies, the Ambassador stated that he very much regretted leaving his post after such a brief period, and stressed that his resignation was for personal reasons. In spite of the brevity of his appointment, the Ambassador felt that he had contributed to an improvement in relations between Argentina and the U.S. He also felt his experience here will be helpful to him in promoting a better understanding of U.S. policy among his contacts in his private capacity.

Human Rights

The Deputy Secretary replied that Ambassador Musich had ably interpreted the difficult situation in Argentina to the American public. Now the Ambassador must carry back the message that human rights is an important issue in the U.S., and that our laws regarding this matter, together with the reaction of the American public, may impact on bilateral relations between the two countries. The Deputy Secretary added that he hopes there will be enough evidence available when the U.S. Congress reconvenes to demonstrate an improvement in the human rights situation in Argentina.

ARA/ECA: RCGraham:rc
(Drafting Office and Officer)

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Ambassador Musich replied that he was confident that the violent era is coming to an end in Argentina, but unless the terrorist organizations are dismembered nothing can be accomplished. The Deputy Secretary said that the U.S. Government understands the problem of dealing with terrorists, but looks for rapid improvement in curtailing counter-terrorism.

New Argentine Ambassador

The Deputy Secretary informed the Ambassador that the White House had just approved agreement for his successor, Jorge Antonio Aja Espil. Musich described Espil as being an old friend, a lawyer with international and Argentine Government experience, who is a friend of the U.S. and prefers to be called Espil. (Earlier, Musich informed Assistant Secretary Shlaudeman that Espil is the nephew of an Argentine Ambassador who served in the U.S. during the Second World War. The uncle is married to an American national.)

Ambassador Musich announced that he will remain in Washington until after the U.S. elections, and that his successor is planning to arrive here between November 10-15.

Clearance: ARA:HWSHlaudeman (in draft)

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October 20, 1976

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Dear Bob:

Thank you very much for the kind words in your letter of September 28.

As you predicted, the Argentine government was angered by the Fraser hearings. They were called on short notice and, as so often happens, the voices making themselves most loudly heard were on the left - in fact, the far left. John Salzberg on Fraser's staff is aware that the hearings were one-sided and hopes to have a wider spectrum of witnesses if there are further hearings after the first of the year.

It seems that victims of left-wing terrorism rarely speak out. Business executives seem to prefer to suffer quietly rather than to put themselves or their companies in the limelight.

Luigi's pessimistic outlook on the impact of human rights concerns on relations is hard to refute. We have all warned the Argentines what lies ahead if their image does not improve.

We cannot concentrate only on negative goals, however, and we must keep trying to hold relations together. You are doing more than your share to achieve this.

The Honorable
Robert C. Hill,
American Ambassador,
Buenos Aires.


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With every best wish,

Sincerely,


Harry W. Shlaudeman
Assistant Secretary for
Inter-American Affairs

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